



**Colorado People's Action (CPA)
Endorsement Questionnaire
Aurora City Council 2019**

- 1. Tell us a little bit about yourself.**
 - a. Why did you decide to run for office and what will your top 3 priorities be if elected to council?**

I am running because I know that Aurora deserves people-centered, people-driven government. In Aurora, our strength is in our diversity, so having all voices heard will allow us to address issues with growth, including housing, infrastructure, and environmental protection. I am committed to servant leadership and co-governing, and would make that a central part of my efforts as a councilmember. My top three priorities would be:

- 1) Ensuring living wage jobs and economic success are available to all people in our city;
- 2) Addressing deficits in our transportation infrastructure, which make work and life harder for our residents and increase vehicle pollution in our city, and;
- 3) Protecting our environment by preserving open spaces and addressing industrial pollution sources.

- 2. The US ranks as a country with one of the highest rates of incarceration in the world and the poorest, most marginalized and people of color disproportionately represent jail and prison populations. What would you do to push the city to address systemic racial bias within the criminal justice system?**

I would work with the police chief to continue improving the training program for recruits, including racial bias/implicit bias training. I would support a community policing model in which officers are expected to spend time in community and get to know community members. I would change the purview of the civil service commission so that police who have been fired with cause for racially-motivated behavior cannot be reinstated against the wishes of department leadership.

I would also work to change the municipal fine structure and penalties for non-payment of fines so that poor people are not imprisoned simply for being unable to pay fines for minor violations.

3. Aurora is the most diverse city in the entire state, with a large number of immigrants within our community.

- a. What is your opinion about the humanitarian crisis happening inside the GEO Immigration Detention Facility and what actions will you take, if any?**

I have vocally opposed the deplorable conditions in the GEO Facility. In general, I believe detaining people without charges who have come here seeking asylum is unacceptable. Just as people who are charged with a crime must quickly have a day in court, I believe our immigrant brothers and sisters should have a day in court quickly and be granted the opportunity to secure their freedom.

- b. Yes or No - Do you support closing all private prisons?**

Yes

- c. Will you work to move Aurora to become a “Sanctuary City” and establish a Legal Defense Fund? Why and explain your definition of “sanctuary city”**

Yes, immigrants and refugees in our city have made our city the thriving, vibrant place it is. Neither they nor their family members should suffer in fear of ICE raids and deportation.

I would look at a separate funding mechanism outside of taxes for a legal defense fund because our ability to collect taxes needed to run the city's basic services is already strained. However, given the high costs of immigration cases, I do think the city should be a part of creating a legal defense fund for immigrants and refugees in our community.

I define a sanctuary city as a city where people have equal protection under the law regardless of immigration status. This means people will not be detained by police or other authorities based solely on immigration status, and police do not hold people so they can be handed over to ICE or give ICE information about the immigration status of people held for crimes in our city. It also means the right to a fair and expedient hearing. Being an immigrant should not remove people's rights to due process and equal protection under the law.

4. Would you drop citizenship requirements for all boards and commissions? Why?

Yes, because every voice matters to the decisions in our city. Immigrants and refugees are a core part of our city and systematically excluding them from having a voice on boards and commissions limits equal representation of all people within our city.

5. We're seeing localities across country moving toward 100% renewable energy. Do you support transitioning Aurora to a 100% renewable energy economy? If so, by when? How will you ensure that communities of color, low-income communities, workers and transit dependent community members are not left behind?

I support a transition to renewables as soon as possible, which is probably 2035 given the need to build considerable amounts of new infrastructure to achieve this goal. I want Aurora to be a leader in so many areas, and this is one where we could build the infrastructure to reduce both industrial and traffic pollution and show the rest of the state how to make it work.

Because city services require a great deal of power, I would begin with city services for transition to renewables. This would allow us to be leaders in a just transition by requiring that renewable energy contractors doing business with the city hire union workers and provide wages and benefits that maintain the standard of living for workers.

By starting with the city, we can also plan our expansion of renewable energy to focus on communities of color and low-income communities by supporting any infrastructure changes in these communities first. In doing that, the city must also tie the updated infrastructure to requirements of keeping communities at risk of displacement in their homes once the neighborhoods have updated infrastructure.

Finally, I believe the city will have to lead in transit that uses electric vehicles. Because RTD does not provide first and last mile transportation to the people of our city, we can fill those gaps with free or low-cost transit made up of an entirely electric powered fleet. This would also allow the city to build robust electric-vehicle charging infrastructure throughout the city.

6. The oil and gas industry in Colorado is edging closer and closer to residential districts, do you have a plan to protect Aurora residents from health and environmental hazards associated with their operations? Do you support a full ban on fracking?

We must bring Aurora in line with SB-181 in the way oil and gas development works. That means taking back local control by addressing the unethical abdication of responsibility our elected leaders chose to undertake in recent operator agreements with the oil and gas industry. Challenging those operator agreements will be step one, which must be followed by health and safety protections for communities and workers in the oil and gas industry. A robust public input process for any future oil and gas development must also be implemented.

I don't think we necessarily need to ban all fracking in all cases. However, environmental impact studies that ensure protection of land, water quality, and air quality must be required for any future fracking.

7. Where do you stand on workers ability to collectively bargain, and would you support a resolution for the workers in the city of Aurora to do so?

Federal law guarantees the rights of workers to collectively bargain. Where laws and rules have been put in place to prevent collective bargaining, they should be challenged. Harassment and intimidation of workers attempting to organize and collectively bargain must be prohibited.

I absolutely support a collective bargaining resolution for workers in the city of Aurora.

8. Aurora now has the power to increase its wages, will you support and fight for Aurora to increase its minimum wage at a higher level than that of the state? What amount do you think that should be?

I supported the local wage option becoming law in Colorado. I support a minimum wage increase to \$17/hr, which is what the self-sufficiency study showed is the minimum for being financially stable while living in the Metro area.

9. We are facing an affordability crisis and many in our community specifically communities of color and low-income folks are being pushed out. What will you do to address affordability issues?

I would work with developers interested in building affordable housing stock rather than those who are hiding behind housing cost inflation as "fair market value." I would require affordable units as part of all new developments, and a higher percentage of affordable units for any project receiving incentives or requesting variances from the city's zoning code. I would also work with partners to create community land trusts so the city can provide affordable housing stock and commercial spaces in perpetuity.

10. If elected, what is your plan for working with community and your vision for changing politics as usual?

My vision includes creating a civic engagement commission to study low levels of civic engagement, participate in community outreach to groups other than registered neighborhood organizations, and continue civic education programs for the people of our city.

It also includes holding town halls at multiple times and locations to ensure that people can make it who currently cannot. I would also live stream town halls when possible and make recordings available after the fact so that people can get educated on the issues affecting them. I would also change the structure of the town hall to include a brief on ordinances I am running and ordinances of interest to the community with Q&A.

I would also overhaul the city's website to make sure information is easily accessible to members of the public.

Finally, I would live stream policy committees and make recordings available to the public. Where possible, I would also work to schedule policy committees at times that are convenient to the public.

11. Will you commit to meeting with COPA quarterly?

Yes

12. Aurora occupies three counties, what is your plan to reconcile them and advance community-centered policy across Aurora as a whole?

I would work together with county commissioners and city councillors from all three counties through existing municipal governance organizations and events. I would partner with these other elected where county involvement or intergovernmental cooperation is needed to effectively implement policies. I would also work to elect people to county commission and city council seats in neighboring cities that will be good partners in moving people-centered, people-driven policies.

13. What are your thoughts on accountability, are you open to be held accountable by groups and community and are you willing to hold others accountable to a vision for a better Aurora?

I believe lack of accountability has eroded public trust in civic institutions. Transparency of information and decision-making is a core value of mine. I will work to engage community members and organizations in transparent process as part of making policy and voting on policy that comes before me. I am absolutely willing to be held accountable and hold others accountable to a city where people can thrive, build community, and put down roots.